



# SHOT TALK



## **A Week of Opportunity**

National Infant Immunization Week, (April 16-22, 2000) is a good time to focus on the importance of getting children immunized, not just to protect the individual child, but to protect the health of the entire community. The more children who are immune from preventable childhood illnesses, the less risk there is for those in the community who are not immunized – this may include the very young, the elderly, those with weakened immune systems, the economically disadvantaged and the under-served.

National Infant Immunization Week (NIIW) will highlight the role we all play in raising infant immunization rates. This year, the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (SAMHD) will promote NIIW with a special Immunization Week Kick Off and Vaccines for Children Appreciation Breakfast. Planned speakers include Dr. Jose Cordero, Deputy Director, National Immunization Program, Robert D. Crider, Director, Immunization Division, Texas Department of Health, and will be moderated by Dr. Fernando Guerra, Director, San Antonio Metropolitan Health District. This event will take place Friday, April 14, 2000 from 7:30am - 10:00am. in the Municipal Auditorium. All VFC providers will be invited.

The breakfast will bring together partners from throughout the City to address a broad range of immunization issues and topics. We

hope to have over 300 attendees. Among those attending will be pediatricians, family physicians, school nurses, physician specialists, pharmacists, lawmakers, childcare workers, and other local people in the healthcare field. Some of the topics for discussion may include new and combination vaccines, vaccine preventable diseases, managed care, immunization tracking systems, adult immunizations, and the latest immunization legislation. Together, we can carry the immunization message to our communities. This year's message is:



Through combined local, regional, and national efforts, National Infant Immunization Week can help to raise infant immunization rates and bring together more diverse partners to contribute to the effort to protect our Nation's children.

To learn how to become involved with local immunization activities, call Pamela C. Williams, Infant Action Plan Coordinator at (210) 207-2869.

## **Let's Get Up To Date!**

It's time for Vaccines for Children

(VFC) Providers to update their enrollment and profiles for 2000. You will begin receiving your VFC profile and enrollment forms this month along with information to help you complete this annual requirement. VFC staff will be available to answer your questions. Be sure to pay close attention to the cover letter, due date and dosage data provided. Failure to submit your updated profile and enrollment forms by April 30, 2000 may cause delays in your vaccine delivery. For more information you may contact Vivian Flores at 207-2868.

## **More Physicians Join VFC**

The VFC Program is growing! We would like to welcome our newest immunization partners:

**Dr. Thomas Gray, Dr. C.C. Chase, Dr. Harry Hernandez, Dr. Salar A. Aziz and Dr. Anna M. Rosales-Lozano.**

## **Welcome Aboard!**

If you have questions about joining the Vaccines for Children Program contact Vivian Flores at 207-2868.

**Upcoming City Holidays**  
*San Jacinto Day, April 28, 2000*  
*Memorial Day, May 29, 2000*

## **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

<i><b>A Week of Opportunity</b></i>	<i><b>Page 1</b></i>	<i><b>SAIRS Up Date</b></i>	<i><b>Page 2</b></i>
<i><b>Update Your VFC Information</b></i>	<i><b>Page 1</b></i>	<i><b>What's Your Hospital's Policy?</b></i>	<i><b>Page 3</b></i>
<i><b>New VFC Partners</b></i>	<i><b>Page 1</b></i>	<i><b>Flu in San Antonio</b></i>	<i><b>Page 4</b></i>
<i><b>Hepatitis A</b></i>	<i><b>Page 2</b></i>	<i><b>Pneu Passes</b></i>	<i><b>Page 4</b></i>
<i><b>RSV Wrap Up</b></i>	<i><b>Page 2</b></i>	<i><b>Foreign Travel Services</b></i>	<i><b>Page 4</b></i>



## Hepatitis A Study

The SAMHD has recently completed a VAQTA™ (Merck & CO.) Hepatitis A clinical vaccine study. The participants involved in this study were children twelve months of age. This study began in April 1999 and evaluated the immunogenicity and safety of this vaccine when given with other routine childhood immunizations.

Children enrolled in this study were required to make four visits to the SAMHD during a seven-month period. During this time, they receive all childhood immunizations as well as two doses of VAQTA™ Hepatitis A.

The SAMHD would like to thank all the providers who referred clients to participate in this vaccine study. We look forward to seeing how this study will impact the current childhood immunization schedule. For more information please call Brenda Lemke at 207-6916.

## RSV Program Wraps Up

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is a respiratory viral infection associated with severe morbidity in prematurely born infants and infants with chronic lung disease. Since 1998, the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (SAMHD) has collaborated with local health care agencies to provide Synagis™ treatment to high-risk infants during RSV season. Children with a gestational age of 35 weeks or less and chronological age of 6 months or less prior to the start of the RSV season are considered high-risk. Synagis™ injections were provided at SAMHD during the RSV season.

This year, SAMHD treated 39 infants with Synagis™ injections; of the 39 none required hospitalization for RSV disease. SAMHD is currently collecting information from providers regarding infants that tested positive for RSV after receiving Synagis™. The infants' Synagis™ dosing will be evaluated to measure the effectiveness of this treatment.

For more information on RSV, or if you would like to submit your RSV information contact Brenda Lemke at 207-6916.

## Hepatitis A Vaccine Becomes Available

The Texas Department of Health (TDH) has recently named San Antonio/Bexar County as one of twenty-two intermediate rate counties for the occurrence of Hepatitis A. As one of these twenty-two counties, the SAMHD is *being strongly encouraged* to immunize children between the ages of 2-5 years with a two dose series of Hepatitis A vaccine. *It is not a school requirement as was the mandate for the thirty-two border counties, but it is a strong recommendation.*

The SAMHD has been allocated Hepatitis A vaccine and will begin delivery to VFC Providers in April 2000. All providers will be encouraged to immunize VFC eligible children, 2-5 years of age, with a complete series (2 doses, 6 to 12 months apart) of Hepatitis A vaccine. Due to funding constraints, the SAMHD is asking VFC providers to limit the use of this vaccine to only the 2 through 5 year old age groups at this time.

For additional information on Hepatitis A and its administration please refer to the *MMWR, October 1, 1999, vol. 48, no. RR-12*. The table below is a quick reference guide for Hepatitis A immunization for 2-5 year old patients. You may call Vivian Flores at 207-2868 for more information.



## Shot Talk

### SAIRS Improvements

This year has been one of great excitement and change for the San Antonio Immunization Registry System (SAIRS). The efforts of our providers have improved immunization levels across the county. As clinics and provider offices implemented the new immunization consent form, the speed and accuracy of data entry has improved dramatically. Last year, immunization data entry staff was reduced by 75% due to budget cuts. Thanks to system improvements and the use of the scanner consent form, we have been able to enter more data each day than had previously been possible. The reduction in staff initially caused delays in immunization information entering SAIRS by four to six months. Presently, immunization data enters SAIRS within five weeks. By the end of March, the backlog of consent forms should be eliminated, enabling staff to enter immunization information into the system on the same day the consent forms are received by SAMHD.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently recognized local immunization efforts by choosing SAIRS as one of five **National Registry Sentinel Sites**, which will serve as model programs for developing systems across the U.S. This honor could not have been achieved without the participation of all VFC providers as well as other immunization providers throughout Bexar County. We look forward to continually exploring the cutting edge of registry technology in the coming year, and we would like to thank our providers for their assistance in the continuing development of SAIRS.

Route of Administration	IM
Vaccination Schedule(mos.)	0, 6-12 (0 represents initial dose; subsequent numbers represent months after the initial dose)
Dosage	0.5cc of ped. formulation
Number of doses in series	2 (see schedule above)
Side effects & adverse events	Local reactions: soreness & redness at injection site, headache, malaise. No serious adverse events have been reported at this time in > 65 million doses.

## Hepatitis B Birth Dose, What's Your Hospital's Policy?

At the March 20th - 23rd CDC's Immunization Program Manager's meeting in Atlanta, the issues surrounding the policies and practices following the Joint Statement from the Public Health Service (PHS) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) (July 1999) regarding the postponing of the first dose of hepatitis B vaccine (from birth until the infant was two to six months of age) was discussed. The issues reviewed included the change in hospital policies and practices in response to this Joint Statement and the availability and use of thimerosal or preservative-free hepatitis B vaccine.

In a survey conducted by the CDC with 773 birthing hospitals nationwide (represents 22% of birth cohort), the following time lines were established in regards to collecting information on individual hospital hepatitis B vaccination policies and procedures: (1) January - June 1999 (2) July - October 1999 (after release of PHS and AAP Joint Statement) and (3) November to December 1999.

According to this data, 542 (or 70%) of the hospitals surveyed had written policies or standing orders for vaccination with hepatitis B vaccine between January - June 1999. However, following the release of the Joint Statement in July, 448 (58%) of the original 542 hospitals changed their policies or standing orders in regards to administering the birth dose of hepatitis B (data obtained from July-October 1999).

In September of 1999, the CDC made available for distribution thimerosal-free hepatitis B vaccine for the birth dose of all VFC eligible infants. However, only 154 (20%) of the hospitals in this survey have ordered and made the vaccine available for those physicians who wish to reinstate the administration of the birth dose of hepatitis B vaccine.

The other area of great concern was observed in the fact that only 91 (12%) hospitals have reverted back to their original policy of standing orders in regards to administering thimerosal free hepatitis B vaccine at birth.

The SAMHD Immunization Program has been very proactive in responding to the thimerosal and hepatitis B issues in San Antonio. The SAMHD Director of Health, Dr. Fernando Guerra, released several statements in support of reinstating the policy of administering the first dose of thimerosal-free hepatitis B vaccine at birth, especially in those cases where the HBsAg status of the mother is either positive or unknown. Since October 1999, the SAMHD Immunization Division has made thimerosal-free hepatitis B vaccine available to all VFC enrolled birthing hospitals and VFC Providers for administration to VFC eligible clients 0-6 months of age. We will continue this practice with future hopes of offering preservative free hepatitis B vaccine for all VFC eligible patients (0-18 years).

If you need additional information regarding the use of preservative free hepatitis B vaccine or wish to order hepatitis B vaccine for your patients, please contact Anthony Johnson at 921-1178.

## Flu Season Hits Hard in San Antonio

Influenza and pneumonia made a significant impact on the San Antonio area during the 1999/2000 influenza season. According to SAMHD's Epidemiologist, Roger Sanchez, this was a longer flu season than in previous years, beginning in December and continuing through March. This was also a season marked with higher mortalities due to flu induced pneumonia. San Antonio usually has one flu-related death during the influenza season. During the 1999/2000 season, four deaths were attributed to flu-related pneumonia. The deaths occurred

## Shot Talk

among senior citizens. Influenza infections primarily occurred among persons under 10 years of age and those 55 years and older. The incidence of flu infections and related deaths support the need for all persons to protect themselves with annual influenza vaccinations. For persons over the age of 65 and those with chronic heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, and other chronic conditions, pneumococcal vaccinations are also highly recommended.

In spite of the higher incidence of flu and pneumonia deaths this past flu season, the SAMHD and its pharmacy partners completed a successful influenza campaign. SAMHD immunized over 20,000 persons from, October 1999 to February 2000 at various clinics throughout the city. Davila Pharmacy and H-E-B pharmacists vaccinated over 8,000 persons from October 1999 through December 1999. The senior population was primarily targeted throughout the campaign.

The ACIP recently released new recommendations to immunize persons 50 years of age and older due to the increased prevalence of high-risk conditions within this age group. Beginning with the 2000/2001 Influenza Campaign Season, immunizing persons 50 years of age and older will be the new national focus.

Providers are urged to immunize their patients for influenza and pneumonia according to ACIP recommendations. For questions on influenza, pneumococcal and other adult immunizations, please contact Rita Salazar at 207-8877.

## Happy Spring





**Benefit - Cost Analysis of Commonly Used Vaccines  
(Savings Per Dollar Invested\*)**

Vaccine	Direct Medical Savings	Direct + Indirect Savings*
<b>DTaP</b>	\$4.10	\$23.40
<b>MMR (includes 2nd dose)</b>	\$10.30+	\$13.50+
<b>OPV/IPV</b>	\$3.40	\$6.10
<b>H. Influenzae Type b</b>	\$1.40	\$2.20
<b>Hepatitis B</b>		
Perinatal	\$0.30	\$7.90
Infant	\$0.40	\$2.90
Adolescent	\$1.10	\$4.80
<b>Varicella</b>	\$0.90	\$5.40

\*Indirect Savings include work-loss, disability and death. +Includes 2nd dose of MMR.

Source: National Immunization Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

### How Much Bang for the Vaccine Buck?

Although vaccines save the lives of children and adults worldwide, what is the economic impact of the federal, state, local and private funds that are being spent on immunizations? The chart above examines the benefit - cost analysis of commonly used vaccines.

### Pneu Passes FDA 2-17-2000

On February 17, 2000, FDA approved a license application for Pneumococcal 7-valent Conjugate Vaccine (Diphtheria CRM197 Protein). Prevnar is the trade name of this vaccine and is indicated for active immunization of infants and toddlers against invasive disease caused by *Streptococcus pneumoniae* due to capsular serotypes included in the vaccine (4, 6B, 9V, 14, 18C, 19F, and 23F). The routine immunization schedule is 2, 4, 6 and 12-15 months of age. Prevnar is manufactured by Lederle Laboratories of Pearl River, NY and is marketed by Wyeth Lederle Vaccines of Philadelphia, PA.

The Vaccines For Children Program currently does not supply this vaccine to public or private providers. The Pneumococcal 7-valent Conjugate Vaccine contract is under negotiations at CDC and the SAMHD Immunization Program expects to make this vaccine available in the latter part of 2000. Please be assured that we will keep all providers up to date on the latest information as it becomes available from CDC.

### CASA Team Says Thanks

The VFC CASA (Clinical Assessment Software Application) Assessment Team wants to thank the following providers for their recent participation:

**Child Care Associates, Borenstein, Lipsitt, Johnson, Maxwell & Scott, Valley Clinic, Quinones Family Medicine, Las Palmas Minor Emergency Clinic, Northwest Pediatric Associates, Crestway Medical Clinic, South Texas Center for Pediatric Care, Dr. Guillermo Marcos, Trinity Medical Group, Dullnig House, Children's Shelter of San Antonio, Battered Women's Shelter of Bexar County, Dr. Maria Aguirre-Hernandez, Holy Cross Family Practice, Alamo City Medical Group.**

Results from a CASA assessment can supply immunization providers invaluable data regarding immunization coverage levels within their practice. To schedule an assessment you may contact Vivian Flores at 207-2868.

### Travel and Adult Services

The SAMHD is here to meet your needs whether you're planning a trip abroad, meeting vaccine requirements for employment or school, or you just want to update your immunizations. Since 1993, the SAMHD has offered health information and immunizations for international travelers. In 1999, approximately 3,600 clients were seen and 5,400 immunizations given.

The Foreign Travel Clinic offers a wide range of vaccines including Yellow Fever with International

Health Certificate, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Typhoid Fever, Meningococcal Meningitis, Immune Globulin, Tetanus/Diphtheria, Measles/Mumps/Rubella, Inactivated Polio, Varicella (Chickenpox), Pre-Exposure Rabies, the newly approved Lymerix (Lyme Disease), Cholera vaccine and Malaria prescriptions. Based on itinerary and destination we can provide information on required or recommended immunizations. Call our Foreign Travel Clinic at (210) 207-8872 to receive further information regarding vaccine prices and consultation fees. The clinic is open Mon. - Fri. 9 am to 3:30 pm by appointment only. Also, visit the CDC Internet site at [cdc.gov/travel/index/htm](http://cdc.gov/travel/index/htm) or call the National Travelers Hotline at (404) 332-4559.

The following vaccines can be given on a walk-in basis Mon. -Fri. 8 am to 5 pm.; Tetanus/Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Measles/Mumps/Rubella, Hepatitis B, Influenza, Pneumonia and Varicella. Tuberculin Skin testing is available each day, excluding Thursday. The Adult Walk-in and Foreign Travel Clinic are located at 345 W. Commerce. For information call (210) 207-8894.

### Immunization Program Contacts

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### Useful Web Addresses

**SAMHD:** [samhd.org](http://samhd.org)  
**TDH:** [tdh.state.tx.us/](http://tdh.state.tx.us/)  
**CDC:** [cdc.gov/](http://cdc.gov/)